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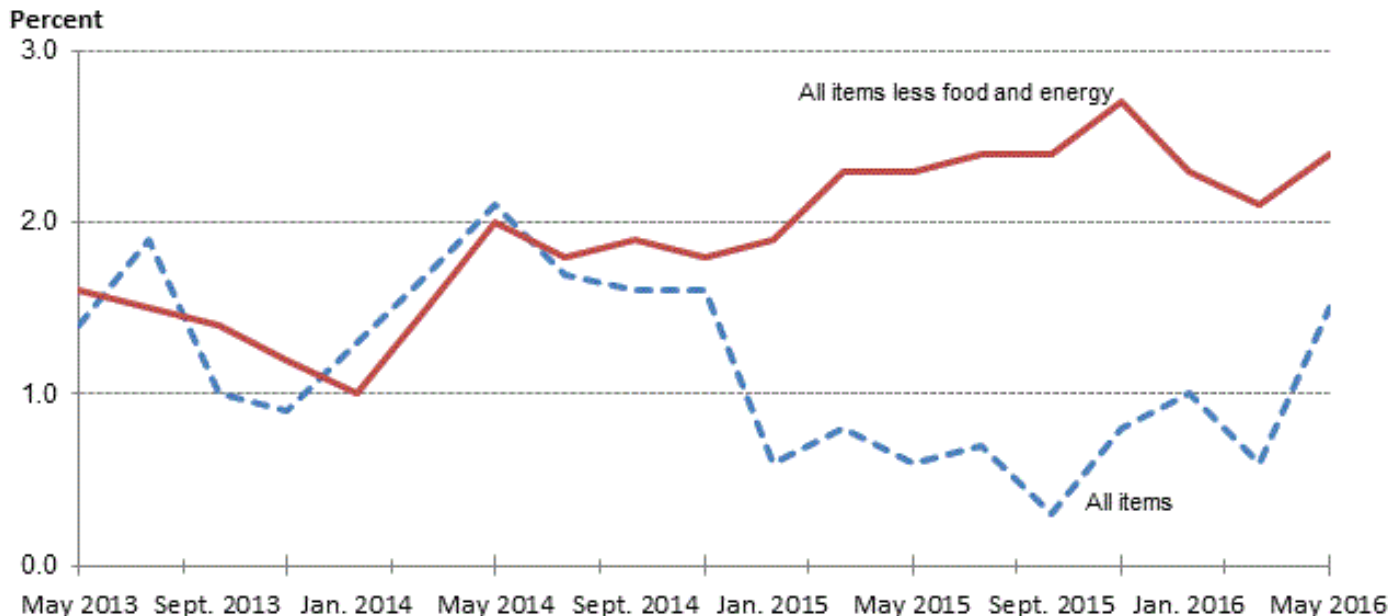
### Consumer Price Index, Boston-Brockton-Nashua — May 2016

Area prices edged up 0.9 percent over two months; up 1.5 percent from a year ago

The Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) in the Boston-Brockton-Nashua area edged up 0.9 percent in May, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. Regional Commissioner Deborah A. Brown noted that the two-month increase was mainly due to higher shelter prices paid by area consumers, up 1.6 percent, and to a lesser extent, higher energy costs, up 5.2 percent. Lower food prices, down 0.7 percent over two months, partially offset the increase. (Data in this report are not seasonally adjusted. Accordingly, bimonthly changes may reflect the impact of seasonal influences.)

Over the last 12 months the Boston CPI-U rose 1.5 percent. The increase was largely attributable to higher prices within all items less food and energy, up 2.4 percent. (See [chart 1.](#)) Lower energy prices paid by area consumers, down 7.0 percent, mitigated the increase.

**Chart 1. Over-the-year percent change in CPI-U, Boston-Brockton-Nashua, May 2013 - May 2016**



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

## **Food**

Food prices edged down 0.7 percent since March mainly due to lower grocery store or food at home prices, down 1.3 percent. Restaurant prices, or food away from home, edged up 0.3 percent partially offsetting this decrease.

Food prices increased 1.2 percent over the year. The increase was mainly attributable to higher restaurant prices, up 3.7 percent. Grocery store prices edged down 0.3 percent partially offsetting the overall increase since last May.

## **Energy**

The energy index advanced 5.2 percent over the two months, mainly due to higher gasoline prices (18.8 percent). Decreases in prices paid by local households for utility (piped) gas (-17.2 percent) mitigated the increase. Local electricity prices were flat over the period.

Energy prices were down 7.0 percent from a year ago, largely attributable to lower gasoline prices, down 14.1 percent. Higher costs for utility (piped) gas and electricity, up 8.8 and 4.3 percent over the year, respectively, partially offset the overall decrease.

## **All items less food and energy**

The index for all items less food and energy rose 0.8 percent from March. The rise was mainly attributable to higher shelter costs, up 1.6 percent. Within the local shelter index, higher prices for owners' equivalent rent and hotel and motel rates led the advance. To a lesser extent, increases in medical care costs (0.7 percent) attributed to this overall advance.

Over the year, the index for all items less food and energy rose 2.4 percent, with higher shelter costs, rising 3.8 percent from May 2015, being the main cause of this increase. This marked the 59th consecutive annual increase in the local shelter index. Within shelter, higher costs for owners' rental equivalency of residences led the increase, up 3.3 percent. Contributing to the overall increase, but to a lesser extent, were higher prices paid by area consumers for medical care, up 6.3 percent from one year ago, and education and communication, up 3.4 percent over the period. Lower clothing costs, down 6.0 percent, partially offset the annual increase locally.

## **CPI-W**

In May, the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W) was 258.958. The CPI-W was up 0.7 percent over two months and increased 1.0 percent over the year.

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**The July 2016 Consumer Price Index for Boston-Brockton-Nashua is scheduled to be released on Tuesday, August 16, 2016, at 8:30 a.m. (ET).**

### **Technical Note**

The Consumer Price Index (CPI) is a measure of the average change in prices over time in a fixed market basket of goods and services. The Bureau of Labor Statistics publishes CPIs for two population groups: (1) a CPI for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) which covers approximately 89 percent of the total population and (2) a CPI for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W) which covers 28 percent of the total population. The CPI-U includes, in addition to wage earners and clerical workers, groups such as professional, managerial, and technical workers, the self-employed, short-term workers, the unemployed, and retirees and others not in the labor force.

The CPI is based on prices of food, clothing, shelter, and fuels, transportation fares, charges for doctors' and dentists' services, drugs, and the other goods and services that people buy for day-to-day living. Each month, prices are collected in 87 urban areas across the country from about 6,000 housing units and approximately 24,000 retail establishments--department stores, supermarkets, hospitals, filling stations, and other types of stores and service establishments. All taxes directly associated with the purchase and use of items are included in the index.

The index measures price change from a designated reference date (1982-84) that equals 100.0. An increase of 16.5 percent, for example, is shown as 116.5. This change can also be expressed in dollars as follows: the price of a base period "market basket" of goods and services in the CPI has risen from \$10 in 1982-84 to \$11.65. For further details see the CPI home page on the Internet at [www.bls.gov/cpi](http://www.bls.gov/cpi) and the BLS Handbook of Methods, Chapter 17, The Consumer Price Index, available on the Internet at <http://www.bls.gov/opub/hom/pdf/homch17.pdf>.

In calculating the index, price changes for the various items in each location are averaged together with weights that represent their importance in the spending of the appropriate population group. Local data are then combined to obtain a U.S. city average. Because the sample size of a local area is smaller, the local area index is subject to substantially more sampling and other measurement error than the national index. In addition, local indexes are not adjusted for seasonal influences. As a result, local area indexes show greater volatility than the national index, although their long-term trends are quite similar. **NOTE: Area indexes do not measure differences in the level of prices between cities; they only measure the average change in prices for each area since the base period.**

The Boston-Brockton-Nashua, Mass.-N.H.-Maine-Conn. consolidated area covered in this release is comprised of Essex, Middlesex, Norfolk, Plymouth, Suffolk, Bristol, Hampden, and Worcester Counties in Massachusetts; Hillsborough, Merrimack, Rockingham, and Strafford Counties in New Hampshire; York County in Maine; and Windham County in Connecticut.

Information in this release will be made available to sensory impaired individuals upon request. Voice phone: (202) 691-5200; Federal Relay Service (800) 877-8339.

**Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U): Indexes and percent changes for selected periods, Boston-Brockton-Nashua, Ma.-N.H.-Maine-Conn., (1982-84=100 unless otherwise noted) (not seasonally adjusted)**

Expenditure category	Indexes				Percent change from		
	Historical data	Mar. 2016	Apr. 2016	May 2016	May 2015	Mar. 2016	Apr. 2016
All items.....		258.587		260.809	1.5	0.9	
All items (1967 = 100).....		751.592		758.050			
Food and beverages.....		259.267		256.680	0.9	-1.0	
Food.....		259.861		257.943	1.2	-0.7	
Food at home.....		248.541	247.397	245.227	-0.3	-1.3	-0.9
Food away from home.....		278.988		279.749	3.7	0.3	
Alcoholic beverages.....		257.191		246.492	-2.4	-4.2	
Housing.....		260.950		263.334	3.0	0.9	
Shelter.....		308.698	311.712	313.483	3.8	1.6	0.6
Rent of primary residence <sup>(1)</sup> .....		318.623	319.968	321.556	3.3	0.9	0.5
Owners' equivalent rent of residences <sup>(1) (2) (3)</sup> ...		329.827	330.660	332.339	3.3	0.8	0.5
Owners' equivalent rent of primary residence <sup>(1) (2) (3)</sup> .....		329.827	330.660	332.339	3.3	0.8	0.5
Fuels and utilities.....		247.654		241.257	0.0	-2.6	
Household energy.....		207.176	207.898	200.631	-0.7	-3.2	-3.5
Energy services <sup>(1)</sup> .....		224.559	224.602	213.753	4.9	-4.8	-4.8
Electricity <sup>(1)</sup> .....		253.078	253.078	253.077	4.3	0.0	0.0
Utility (piped) gas service <sup>(1)</sup> .....		167.091	167.208	138.403	8.8	-17.2	-17.2
Household furnishings and operations.....		129.837		129.171	-0.1	-0.5	
<b>Apparel</b> .....		141.606		143.386	-6.0	1.3	
Transportation.....		179.643		187.009	-3.0	4.1	
Private transportation.....		177.985		185.047	-2.6	4.0	
Motor fuel.....		164.693	184.770	195.315	-14.3	18.6	5.7
Gasoline (all types).....		162.807	182.910	193.373	-14.1	18.8	5.7
Gasoline, unleaded regular <sup>(4)</sup> .....		156.918	177.350	187.597	-15.4	19.6	5.8

**Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U): Indexes and percent changes for selected periods, Boston-Brockton-Nashua, Ma.-N.H.-Maine-Conn., (1982-84=100 unless otherwise noted) (not seasonally adjusted) - Continued**

Expenditure category	Indexes				Percent change from		
	Historical data	Mar. 2016	Apr. 2016	May 2016	May 2015	Mar. 2016	Apr. 2016
Gasoline, unleaded midgrade <sup>(4) (5)</sup> .....		177.968	194.236	204.088	-12.3	14.7	5.1
Gasoline, unleaded premium <sup>(4)</sup> .....		178.883	192.565	202.924	-9.9	13.4	5.4
<b>Medical care</b>		632.357		637.085	6.3	0.7	
<b>Recreation <sup>(6)</sup></b>		117.577		116.731	-0.7	-0.7	
<b>Education and communication <sup>(6)</sup></b>		156.459		155.893	3.4	-0.4	
<b>Other goods and services</b>		448.359		447.950	0.5	-0.1	
Commodity and service group.....							
Commodities.....		186.111		188.350	-1.7	1.2	
Commodities less food and beverages.....		148.240		152.300	-3.8	2.7	
Nondurables less food and beverages.....		184.331		193.458	-6.0	5.0	
Durables.....		111.828		111.808	-0.2	0.0	
Services.....		324.091		326.285	3.4	0.7	
Special aggregate indexes.....							
All items less shelter.....		241.542		242.782	0.4	0.5	
All items less medical care.....		244.270		246.394	1.2	0.9	
Commodities less food.....		152.478		156.125	-3.7	2.4	
Nondurables.....		220.506		224.115	-2.1	1.6	
Nondurables less food.....		188.514		196.351	-5.6	4.2	
Services less rent of shelter <sup>(2)</sup> .....		358.819		358.203	3.1	-0.2	
Services less medical care services.....		302.978		305.316	3.2	0.8	
Energy.....		187.218	196.348	196.875	-7.0	5.2	0.3
All items less energy.....		269.140		270.660	2.2	0.6	

**Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U): Indexes and percent changes for selected periods, Boston-Brockton-Nashua, Ma.-N.H.-Maine-Conn., (1982-84=100 unless otherwise noted) (not seasonally adjusted) - Continued**

Expenditure category	Indexes				Percent change from		
	Historical data	Mar. 2016	Apr. 2016	May 2016	May 2015	Mar. 2016	Apr. 2016
All items less food and energy.....		271.556		273.669	2.4	0.8	

(1) This index series was calculated using a Laspeyres estimator. All other item stratum index series were calculated using a geometric means estimator.

(2) Indexes on a December 1982=100 base.

(3) This index series underwent a change in composition in January 2010. The expenditure class now includes weight from secondary residences, and has been re-titled "Owners' equivalent rent of residences." The item stratum "Owners' equivalent rent of primary residence" excludes secondary residences.

(4) Special index based on a substantially smaller sample.

(5) Indexes on a December 1993=100 base.

(6) Indexes on a December 1997=100 base.

Note: Index applies to a month as a whole, not to any specific date.